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ABSTRACT

To implement the K-12 portion of the Career Education Incentive Act, an outline of some general strategies on which operational strategies can be based is needed. There are six strategies which will help us deliver the most effective career education program in the five-year time frame provided by this law. The following points summarize these strategies: (1) begin with a clear understanding of what career education is and how we propose to implement it; (2) make sure that there exists an internal readiness and expertise within professional educators for implementing career education before seeking broader community involvement; (3) use existing community groups as a basis in seeking broader community involvement; (4) establish effective cooperative working relationships within the community; (5) share career education ownership with the broader community as we move toward collaboration; and (6) make sure career education works wherever it is implemented. (These strategies are discussed for each of the five years provided by this law.) (EM)

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Strategy Considerations For Implementing The K-12 Portion Of The Career Education Incentive Act

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Introduction

It would be both improper and impossible for me to outline specific operational strategies to be used by State Departments of Education and local school districts in implementing the Career Education Incentive Act. Such specific strategies will, and should, vary greatly from State to State and from community to community. The fact that this law makes such variation possible is one of its greatest strengths.

At the same time, some kind of outline of basic general strategies on which specific operational strategies can be based seems very much needed. Such general strategies can be helpful if they are viewed as "food for thought" rather than as a "blueprint for action." That is the purpose of this presentation.

Two concepts differentiate this law from most other pieces of Federal legislation. First, use of the word "incentive" in its title makes it clear that funds are to be used to help those State Departments of Education and local school systems who wish to implement career education do so. The Congress has neither asked nor demanded that career education be implemented. Rather, it has responded to what it preceived to be a grass roots appeal for assistance. This is clearly evident in the small sums of money authorized - and the even smaller sums expected to be appropriated - for this law. With these amounts, "assistance" is possible but "demands" is not.

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Second, the "sunset" provisions in this law make it obvious that the Federal incentive effort is intended to be terminated at the end of the 1982-83 school year. The Congress has assumed that Federal assistance during this five year period will allow States and local school systems to test the career education concept and decide for themselves whether or not to fund it, on a continuing basis, using State and/or local funds. Federal assistance is being made available for "start up" costs, but not for continuing, sustaining efforts.

These two concepts, in my opinion, represent a welcomed challenge. I like very much the principle that sees Federal assistance coming as an outgrowth to local and State calls for help. I like even more the principle of Federal assistance without any implications of Federal dictation or Federal control. If these challenges can be met through this legislation, we may well see emergence of a model that, in the future, will be applied to other parts of education. The strategies formulated for use of these funds have implications far beyond the concept of career education.

The operational strategies to be adopted by State Departments of Education and local school districts will obviously have to be put in the five year time frame provided by this law. Strategies appropriate for application in any given year will vary considerably, of course, in terms of past activities in career education. Here, I would like to discuss some general strategies, for each of the five years, that hopefully, will illustrate my aspirations with respect to fulfilling the intent of the Congress. I would suspect that the strategies may make more sense to many communities than will the time frame I have used for stating them.

By The End of Year 1

By the end of the 1978-79 school year, it is my hope that a general strategy will have been employed that sees the concept of career education (a) defined with community input (b) in terms consistent with the law (c) in ways that reflect obviously recognized community needs (d) that recognize the need for community participation in implementation and (e) represents a relatively low cost "people effort" rather than carrying any kind of "program add-on" implications.

I see no way any effort, such as career education, can be implemented until it is first defined in terms of what it is, why it is needed, who is to deliver it, and the basic ways in which it is to be carried out. If the community is to be involved in its delivery, then it must also become involved in its definition. If career education is defined by educators and then presented to the community, the community will inevitably feel they are helping the school system with an educational problem. The first strategy question to be considered is whether to consider career education as an education system effort or as a community effort. I am convinced it is wiser, from the outset, to picture it as a community effort.

The law itself defines the parameters around which a career education effort can be constructed. Fortunately, it is written in such a way that many kinds of career education models can be built without breaking the law. Of the common career education models now in existence, only those that call for (a) employing specialists at the building level; (b) concentrating only on secondary school age youth; and/or (c) using an alternative school, as opposed to improving the present

school, approach to change are illegal. Most of you will recognize that these restrictions eliminate only the classic EBCE model from those career education models now in common usage.

The concept must be stated in such ways that it clearly concentrates on meeting one real identified community need while, at the same time, holding promise for contributing to, rather than conflicting with, other recognized needs. The career education concept clearly meets this requirement. If, for example, one were to examine the seven basic ways the American public is currently asking American education to change - as reflected in the 10th annual gallup education poll - career education is primarily concerned about one of these ways ("more emphasis on careers") while holding direct potential for making contributions to each of the remaining six. While career education cannot afford to adopt a strategy of pretending to be the answer to all of these problems, it must endorse a strategy that stresses its potential for contributing to each without competing with any.

If communities are expected to take over the costs of the effort, then the concept itself must be stated in ways that do not involve substantial increases in the school budget. Similarly, the community cannot be expected to take over any costs, no matter how small, unless the concept demonstrates its worth. The only way a truly effective, low cost effort can be mounted is through a strategy of "people change" rather than "program add on." This means, operationally, that, when the school board adopts a career education policy, that policy must put basic accountability on all professional educators and provide some kind of rewards system to accompany it.

If these first year strategies work, the end of the first year will see a situation where: (a) career education is understood and accepted by the general community; (b) career education has been endorsed by the school board; and (c) a community career education action council has been formed and charged with responsibility for devising implementation schemes.

By The End Of Year 2

By the end of the 1979-80 school year, it is my hope that: (a) a massive career education infusion effort will have taken place in the K-12 school system; (b) strategies for involving community youth organizations in the career education effort will have been devised and implemented; and (c) initial strategies for involving adult community groups in the career education effort will have been formulated and implemented.

Based on experiences to date, it seems safe to assume many segments of the broader community are now more ready for career education than any professional educators. It would be disastrous to adopt a strategy that calls for bringing the community in closer contact with educators until we are sure that: (a) educators want to interact with them; and (b) educators know why they need them and what they need them for. Specific infusion strategies will have to be devised that recognize the necessity of providing educators time to learn how to infuse career education concepts into subject matter, the importance of using career education as only one of several motivational devices, and the essentialness of providing rewards to those educators most successful in utilizing the career education process. Unless change can be seen coming internally from among educators in the school system, it

is doubtful if much change can be expected within the broader community.

A general strategy of recognizing and working actively with community youth organizations involved in career education seems to be highly desirable. Such groups have been engaged in career education - even though they haven't used that term - for a good many years. Several have experienced problems and frustrations in their earlier attempts to work with educators. These include organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts of the USA, Junior Achievement, 4-H, the Nike Clubs of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and many others. If school systems would welcome and work positively with such groups, several advantages would accrue to career education including (a) better quality of delivery of total career education to youth; (b) increased contacts with members of the broader community; and (c) availability of expertise in learning how to best use members of the broader community in the delivery of career education. The stronger and more effective we help such groups become, the better will be the delivery of career education to youth.

In terms of community efforts, it seems to me crucial that those seeking to implement career education recognize and take advantage of opportunities to enhance this effort through provisions of the current YEDPA legislation. This legislation, in addition to providing clear ways of meeting additional costs associated with providing effective career education to economically disadvantaged youth, holds high potential for use in secondary school career education implementation efforts through its "transition services" provisions. If a strategy is adopted that seeks to merge the career education and the YEDPA efforts, both will better meet their

individual goals. Further, more career education funds will then be available for use at the K-6 levels.

A number of adult community organizations exist holding high potential for participating in the effective delivery of career education. Those whose goals are compatible with those of the education system should, in terms of general strategy, be sought out. It would seem wiser strategy to use existing community organizations than to approach something as nebulous as "the community" as a whole. To adopt such a general strategy has several advantages including; (a) getting community leaders involved in career education; (b) developing communications channels for reaching various segments of the community; and (c) organizing community resources in ways that are both efficient and effective. This general strategy is one that depends on recognition, at the local level, of persons in each organization who have the interest and ability to really "make career education happen." Such community organizations include, for example, the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, local central AFL/CIO Labor Council, American Legion/Legion Auxiliary, Business and Professional Women's Club, Women's American ORT, National Urban League, Local Council of Churches, Local Chapters of the American Association of Retired Persons, and many others. The general strategy should be one of enlisting their participation in career education in ways that also enhance the goals of each community organization. It is not, and cannot be, a one way street.

If these second year strategies work, we should see a situation where: (a) the school system should be ready for a comprehensive community career education effort; (b) existing community youth organizations already delivering career

education are strengthened through help given them by the education system; and (c) an organizational structure and communication system has been established with existing adult community organizations that will make the delivery of career education proceed in an orderly and systematic fashion.

By The End Of Year 3

By the end of the 1980-81 school year, it is my hope that a concerted nationwide attempt will have been made to implement a comprehensive career education effort with a high degree of cooperation existing between the education system and a key nucleus of community organizations. If comprehensive efforts can be assured, it is my further hope that high priority will be given to careful evaluations of career education's effectiveness.

Just as comprehension logically precedes communication, so, too, does cooperation logically precede collaboration. People have to learn to work together, to trust each other, and to help each other before they can comfortably share in the "ownership" of a concept such as career education. It would seem to me to be a wise general strategy to allow collaboration to evolve out of comprehensive cooperative efforts.

By the beginning of the 1981-82 school year, those communities - including those school districts - who are ready to begin comprehensive career education efforts should be apparent. One way of distinguishing such communities from those who are not will be to see which communities are willing to start using their own funds to pay 25% of the costs associated with career education. A second way will be to assess the proportion of professional educators in the community who appear to both understand and are enthusiastic about career education. A third way will be

to assess expressions of interest and willingness to participate on the part of community organizations. I would definitely opt for a general strategy in this, the third year of the act, that calls for concentrating Federal funds on those communities who appear ready to implement comprehensive career education efforts.

As a general strategy, I would further urge that the comprehensiveness of evaluation efforts be related to the comprehensiveness of the implementation effort. Superficial implementation efforts deserve no more than superficial evaluations. Comprehensive implementation efforts demand comprehensive evaluations. As a general rule, I would hope that evaluation efforts utilize criteria meaningful to the general community stated in terms directly related to the prime goals of career education and measured in such a fashion that proper credit - or lack of credit - can be given to participating community organizations as well as to the education system.

Even as this relatively early stage, it does not seem unreasonable to consider a strategy that calls for identifying at least one school system in each State whose career education efforts produce evaluative data that could be submitted to USOE's Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP) for approval and subsequent insertion into the National Diffusion Network (NDN). This is an important strategy for two basic reasons: (a) it will result in wide national publicity for career education efforts that have proven themselves to be effective; and (b) other school systems can, in later years, use ESEA funds for adopting models of career education in the NDN network long after the brief 5 year life of this act has ended.

If evaluation results are shared with all cooperating elements and with the general public, the groundwork will have been laid for moving from a cooperative to a collaborative career education effort.

By The End Of Year 4

By the end of the 1981-82 school year, I would hope that beginning collaborative career education efforts could be mounted in many communities. By this time, of course, Federal funds can pay for only up to 50% of the costs for implementing career education with the other 50% coming from State and/or local funds. If responsibility for the effectiveness of career education is to be shared between the education system and the broader community, so, too, must its "ownership" be shared. The school system must be willing to give away part of the ownership and the broader community must be willing to accept it. It is unreasonable to expect that the process will be completed in many communities by the end of the 1981-82 school year, but it is essential that it be begun.

There are three basic reasons why I suggest this general strategy. First, it seems reasonable to expect that results of the first comprehensive evaluation efforts will make clear many needs for improvement. Such improvements are sure to demand both the expertise and the resources of the broader community in addition to those available within the education system. Second, if the broader community becomes involved in making directional decisions and providing some financial support to the career education effort, it seems likely it will become even more supportive of the total effort. Third, without continuing community pressure, it is, in my opinion, unrealistic to think that the education system will continue

the career education effort on a long term basis. Too many other new things will have come along.

If "ownership" of career education is truly begun to be shared with the broader community, I am confident that the evaluation results by the end of the fourth year will be even more impressive than those collected earlier. Many more career education efforts should find their way into the NDN Network which, in combination, will represent a wide variety of ways in which career education can be successfully implemented. It seems to me the fourth year would be an appropriate one to encourage a widespread JDRP/NDN effort.

By The End Of Year 5

By the end of the 1982-83 school year, it seems wise to me to adopt a general strategy that calls for Federal funds to be used only in those communities where a true community collaborative career education effort is in place. By that time, 75% of the operating costs will be borne by States and/or local communities. The Federal Government will be out of the picture in terms of providing direct financial assistance by the end of the 1982-83 school year. That part of the intent of the Congress will have been met.

Crucial strategy questions will have to be solved in each State regarding the extent to which the career education effort should be funded primarily with local funds, primarily with State funds, or with some combination of State and local funds. The correct strategy to be applied will differ considerably from State to State. In those States where State funds are sought, an essential part of the strategy required will be in the form of grass roots appeals from participating community organizations to their State counterparts for purposes of influencing State

legislation. In other States, I would anticipate finding no need for such action.

By the end of the fifth year, it must be remembered that there will have been five years of concentrated demonstration efforts for career education at the postsecondary education levels -- including the area of adult education. A continuing community career education effort must, it seems to me, recognize the importance of extending that effort to include students in postsecondary educational institutions and adults as well as the K-12 student population. There is no way, in my opinion, that those planning long range strategies for career education can limit themselves to only the K-12 school system.

The costs of career education in this fifth year and beyond should be limited to maintenance costs rather than the more expensive start up costs of earlier years. These will include costs associated with community coordinating efforts, communication efforts, evaluative efforts, continuing inservice efforts for both educators and community personnel, and some costs associated with career education materials. While these sustaining maintenance costs will not be large, neither will they be nonexistent. By the end of the fifth year, they should be well known and plans made to provide for them that involve financial contributions from both the education system and from the broader community.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The broad, general strategies I have discussed here can be summarized in a very few basic points including the following:

Strategy 1: Don't rush into full scale implementation efforts

until we have had time to regroup, to correct our earlier conceptual errors made in the beginning days of career education, and to present a modern up-to-date concept that pictures career education as a total community effort aimed at preparing persons for work in ways that extend beyond providing them with specific entry level job skills. We must, if we are to implement career education, begin with a clear understanding of what it is and how we propose to implement it.

Strategy 2: Make sure that there exists an internal readiness and expertise within professional educators for implementing career education before seeking broader community involvement on an intensive basis. An accountability and rewards system must be built into this internal readiness phase.

Strategy 3: In seeking involvement of the broader community, use existing community groups as a basis rather than a "shot gun" approach to the entire community. In doing so, plan strategies in such a way that each such community group is a beneficiary of as well as a contributor to career education. This is essential to a sustaining community effort.

Strategy 4: Cooperation precedes collaboration. We cannot hope to enter into a collaborative effort until and unless we are first successful in establishing effective cooperative working relationships with the community.

Strategy 5: As we move toward collaboration, we must do so by sharing ownership of career education with the broader community. This means returning to the general community some of the responsibilities which, in earlier years, they had turned over to the education system to do alone.

Strategy 6: Devote relatively greater efforts to making sure career education works where it is implemented than in making beginning implementation efforts in every school district. If we follow this strategy, we will be building opportunities for other school districts to initiate career education efforts later using funds other than those available under this act.

These six general strategies, along with the several smaller sub-strategies presented in this paper, are ones that, in my opinion, will help us deliver the most effective career education effort while following the congressional mandate for only a five year period in which to make this next big breakthrough in the career education "crusade." Career education started with a rush in 1971 and has continued to appeal to the general public ever since. After a very rapid beginning - including the making of many conceptual and operational errors - it has, in the last three years, been operating on a plateau where interest in and enthusiasm for career education has exceeded, by a very wide margin, opportunities for its implementation. In enacting the Career Education Incentive Act, the Congress has provided us with a much needed and very timely opportunity to make another big surge forward. It is an opportunity that must not be missed.

There are many, I'm sure, who believe career education has run its course

and is now on the way out as just "another passing fad." In my opinion, we are, with the help of his legislation, really just beginning. With the Federal assistance provided under this act coupled with the enthusiasm and expertise of those many career education advocates who, through all of our difficulties and disappointments, have refused to ever give up, I contend that we are now about to really make career education a reality in America. It is time we do so.